RAJYA SABHA

Tuesday, the 20th December, 2005/29 Agrahayana, 1927 (Saka)

The House met at eleven of the clock,

MR. CHAIRMAN in the Chair.

ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

प्रो॰ राम देव भंडारी: सभापति जी, मैं एक निवेदन करना चाहता हूं कि इस एम॰पी॰ लेड ...(व्यवधान)...

श्री सभापति: क्वेश्चन के बाद में कर लेना। ...(व्यवधान).... I won't allow you now. *(Interruptions)*

प्रो॰ राम देव भंडारी: मैं आपसे अपील करना चाहता हूं कि सांसद निधि को बन्द कराया जाए।...(व्यवधान)....

श्री सभापति: आप इसको छोड़िए, आप जरा तसल्ली रखिए, इतने दिन से एम॰पी॰ लेड स्कीम चल रही है और इस समय क्वेश्चन ऑवर में एक मिनट में आप बात उठा रहे हैं।

Rise in tourist inflow

*381. DR. KARAN SINGH:†
DR. T. SUBBARAMI REDDY:

Will the Minister of TOURISM AND CULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether tourist inflow for seven month period ending August, 2005 is up by 15.6 per cent to 2.37 Million against 2.05 Million in corresponding period last year;

(b) whether the annual tourist inflow has been around 2.3 Million till 2003;

(c) whether with the current growth rate, the tourist inflow is likely to cross 4 Million mark in 2005;

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†The question was actually asked on the floor of the House by Dr. Karan Singh.

(d) what steps, Government propose to take, to improve other facilities in India so that tourist inflow is further improved; and

(e) what concrete steps Government propose to take to provide security to foreign tourists and also hotel and other facilities in various parts of the country?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF TOURISM (SHRIMATI RENUKA CHOWDHURY): (a) to (e) A Statement is laid on the Table of the Sabha.

Statement

(a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Foreign tourist arrivals to India during 2001, 2002 and 2003 was 2.54 Million, 2.38 Million and 2.73 Million respectively.

(c) Going by the growth of about 14% observed during the first 11 months of the year 2005 over the same period of last year, it is expected that foreign tourist arrivals during 2005 may be around 3.8 Million.

(d) Development of places of tourist interest is primarily the responsibility of the State Governments. However, Ministry of Tourism provides financial assistance to the State Governments for the projects which are prioritized in consultation with them every year under its various schemes. Further, in order to improve the tourist inflow into the country, various steps taken by the Government, include:—

- Development of tourist spots under its various schemes of infrastructure development of tourist circuits and destinations;
- Direct approach to the consumers through electronic and print media through the "Incredible India" Campaign;
- Creation of World Class Collaterals;
- Centralized Electronic Media Campaign;
- Direct co-operative marketing with tour operators and wholesalers overseas;
- Greater focus in the emerging markets, particularly in the region of China, North East Asia and South East Asia;

- Participation in Trade Fairs & Exhibitions;
- Optimizing Editorial PR and Publicity;
- Use of Internet and Web Marketing;
- Generating Tourist Publications;
- Re-inforcing hospitality programmes including grant of air passeges to invite media personnel and tour operators on familiarization tours to India to get first hand knowledge on various tourism products;
- Launching of Road Shows in keysource markets of Europe;
- Focusing on growth of hotel infrastructure particularly budget hotels; and
- Enhancing connectivity through augmentation of air capacity and improving road infrastructure to major tourist attractions.

(e) For the safety and security of tourists, the Government has deployed Police at the International Airport and important tourist centres. They have also been given orientation training in tourism related aspects. The Ministry of Tourism has advised all the State Governments/UTs to deploy Tourist Policy at all important tourist centres/destinations, and many States have deployed the Tourist Police Force in one form or another. The Ministry of Home Affairs have also been addressed in this regard.

As regards hotels, all the States have been requested to allot maximum number of plots in the States for setting up of hotels. Ministry of Railways have been requested to set up 100 Railway Hotels of 100 capacity each at the surplus railway land to augment the hotel accommodation. Guidelines have been issued for approval of Guest Houses with the objectives of providing standardized accommodation to budget tourist, and to augment the hotel accommodation in the country. For providing basic facilities to tourists at tourist places like clean toilets, water supply, parking areas, etc, and also to improve tourism infrastructure in destinations/circuits, Ministry of Tourism has been providing financial assistance to the States on *inter-se* priority basis subject to availability of funds.

DR. KARAN SINGH: Mr. Chairman, Sir, before I ask my question, I would like to declare that I do have an interest in tourism; both my sons run small Heritage Tourist Hotels in Jammu and Kangra.

Sir, the tourist fugures which the hon. Minister has given us, relate to tourist arrivals. Now, in Europe, for example, if somebody visits Spain for one day, it is one tourist. In India, they may stay for 21 days. So, the modern method of computing tourists is to work out the tourist days that are spent rather than the number of tourists. That would, I think, give a more accurate impression of our share of world tourism and of the number of tourists that come to India. Would the Minister let us know whether she is prepared now to move from the old system of counting tourists to a more advanced and comprehensive system?

SHRIMATI RENUKA CHOWDHURY: Sir, I take this opportunity to thank Dr. Karan Singh for his valuable advice. He is no stranger to tourism. He was, in fact, the architect, and the Minister of Tourism many, many years ago. We still go by what this recommendations were.

MR. CHAIRMAN: So, there should be no supplementary.

SHRIMATI RENUKA CHOWDHURY: I am just placing it on record as to why he deserves to be given a detailed reply.

I would like to inform Dr. Karan Singh that we are now developing the Satellite Accounting System which has been the accepted system of estimating the economic benefits of tourism across the world. Tourist inflows and arrivals are the numbers passing through immigration, which are taken into account. But he is right, we do not have an adequate detabase system which can regularly estimate tourists' stay and how many tourist nights are spent here.

DR. KARAN SINGH: Mr. Chairman, Sir, the importance of promoting tourism abroad is very well established and I would like to compliment the hon. Minister and the Department for their new campaign, 'Incredible India'. However, in my experience, what we did was, we took advantage of Air India offices round the world, Indian airlines offices and also, indeed, the work being done by the ICCR. Would the Minister let us know whether in her tourism promotion programme, she will take full advantage of these offices that already exist around the world so that our promotion can be more effective and more tourists can be encouraged to visit India?

SHRIMATI RENUKA CHOWDHURY: Absolutely, Sir. Since the hon. Member is also the Chairperson of the ICCR, it would be a very valuable

partnership for me in promoting India across the world. Sir, culture is that much more effective when it is added to tourism to promote India's image abroad. He mentioned about Air India offices. Sir, today what hurts tourism are inadequate airports and inadequate airlines. So, I will be very happy to sign MoUs with not just Air India, but also with other airlines, since there is a dwindling number of aircraft in Air India and the inadequate infrastructure. It hurts our business. we are actually turning tourists away because of inadequate airlines.

DR. T. SUBBARAMI REDDY: Sir, I am happy that during the tenure of our present Tourism Minister, our tourism industry is standing at the second position. In fact, China is the shining star in the world map. In any city of India, as far as the accommodation position of hotels is concerned, today, people have to wait for ten days for getting accommodation in a hotel. This is the situation which is being faced by domestic tourists. If this is the position of our hotels, then, how can we attract more tourists? I would like to compliment the hon. Minister for achieving a very high growth rate in the tourism sector. In her written reply, the hon. Minister has stated that the State Government have been requested to give plots for constructing hotels. That is not sufficient. I want a comprehensive reply from the hon. Minister. I know that the Tourism Minister alone cannot solve it. Several Ministries have to play a big role in building hotels, not only in big cities, but also in small cities. It should be done, in such a way, that we are able to match the future growth of tourism industry with the requirement of hotels. I request the hon. Minister that she should raise this issue in the Cabinet meeting by involving other Ministers so that this problem is solved. Sir, I request the hon. Minister to reply to this.

SHRIMATI RENUKA CHOWDHURY: Sir, I will always pray, at the very outset, that India's hotels will always be full like this, and that we will always need more hotels for more business. But having said that, the tragedy for us is, Sir, that India waits for a national games to happen before we will build hotels. The last time India looked comprehensively at building hotels was during the asian Games. And now, everybody talks about the Commonwealth Games before we build hotels. India needed hotels yesterday. We needed it yesterday because that is the kind of business that we are giving today. However, we have approached the Union Cabinet Minister for Urban Development asking for land. We have also asked our State Governments to identify it. Since land does not come

within the purview of tourism, we are necessarily dependent on other States. In the meantime, we have taken some creative initiatives whereby we are encouraging home stays, bed and breakfast, luxury tents as well as guest houses, forest guest houses, PWD old guest houses to be refurbished and to be utilised to accommodate tourists, given the pressure that we are facing today.

श्री रूद्रनारायण पाणि: सभापति महोदय, उड़ीसा वह पवित्र राज्य है, जहां चन्डाशोक धर्माशोक बने थे।

श्री सभापति: और जहां आप पैदा हुए हैं।

श्री रूद्रनारायण पाणि: महोदय, उससे पहले भी बुद्ध धर्म का व्यापक प्रचार-प्रसार उड़ीसा में हुआ था आज भी जब खनन होता है, तो उसमें बुद्ध धर्म के बहुत से अवशेष उड़ीसा में मिलते हैं। महोदय, आज भी दुनिया में बुद्ध धर्म को embrace करने वाले बहुत से लोग हैं। मेरे कहने का मतलब यह है कि उड़ीसा में बुद्धिस्ट टूरिस्ट आने की जो संभावना है, उसके बारे में मंत्री महोदया के पास क्या जानकारी है और राज्य की इकानॉमी को उससे कैसे सहायता मिल सकती है, कृपया मंत्री महोदय बताएं।

श्री सभापति: बहुत बढ़िया।

श्रीमती रेणुका चौधरी: सर, मैं बहुत खुश हूं और आपके द्वारा मैं माननीय सांसद को बताना चाहती हूं कि बुद्धिस्ट सर्किट में, देश भर में हमने 17 स्टेट्स को पहचाना है, जिनमें उड़ीसा भी प्रथम स्थिति में शमिल है। मैं चाहती हूं कि मैम्बर अपनी तरफ से उड़ीसा सरकार को इतना प्रभाव में लाएं कि उसकी प्रगति के लिए अगर किसी प्रोजेक्ट को प्रपोज़ल तुरंत हमारे पास पहुंचा दें, तो हम उसके लिए पैसा भी देने को तैयार है। ...(व्यवधान)

श्री रूद्रनारायण पाणि: हमारे चीफ मिनिस्टर जी की फ्रेंड हैं।

श्रीमती रेणुका चौधरी: आपकी फ्रेंड नहीं हूं? ...(व्यवधान)... क्यों, आप नहीं हैं मेरे दोस्त?

SHRI SANTOSH BAGRODIA: Sir, I would like to inform the hon. Minister that India still depends on foreign tourists, in a big way. I want to know from the hon. Minister whether we have enough capacity in our

different Missions to issue visas to tourists. We should have some special consideration for giving visas to tourists. How much capacity do we have in different countries for issuing visas to tourists? We should increase the present capacity so that we can have more tourists in our country.

Secondly, we should not think that only five-star tourists are coming here. We have a number of tourists who would like to stay in cheaper hotels because our hotels are more expensive than hotels of even the European countries. I want to know from the hon. Minister whether the Government has any plan to focus on budget hotels all over the country. The kind of advertisements we are seeing even in Delhi are only for five-star hotels. What efforts are you making to build budget hotels?

SHRIMATI RENUKA CHOWDHURY: Sir, the hon. Member has asked question in two parts. The first part addresses a very vital issue: whether our Missions abroad are able to service the visa procedures adequately. I think, he has touched the core subject for us, Sir, because it is a fact that in countries like France, in Paris alone, at times we have a demand for 1,000 visas to be issued per day but the Mission is unable to do that and at best they process 400-450 visas in a day. So, the result of which is that we are actually turning away our tourists who want to come to India and other tour agents then coerce them to go to other countries where the visa procedures are simpler. This is some thing for which we have approached the MEA to address and to look at how other countries are servicing visa requirement . Some of them have outsourced them but that is for the MEA to take a call.

As regards the second part of his question, Sir, about hotels and requirements for two, three and four-star hotels, of course, we take complete cognisance of that. We are aware that there are very many tourists who want to come to India and not want to stay in five star hotels; private initiatives also have helped to establish two, three and four-star hotels. If you look at the Taj Group of Hotels, IndiOne has set up low-budget hotels of less than a thousand rupees a day in some of the destinations. Mr. Chairman knows best, that in his own home State, Rajasthan, in the villages of Shekhawati and other places, we have had two, three and four-star hotels.

SHRI LALIT SURI: Mr. Chairman, Sir, the increase in tourism is about 15 per cent a year. We are lacking in all the infrastructure which relates to the incoming tourists.....

SHRI NILOTPAL BASU: Sir, I have one point to make. In the Fourth Report of the Ethics Committee, it has been pointed out that those Members who speak on a subject, if they have an interest in that area, then, they should declare that as the Chairman of the Ethics Committee has done. I think, that rule should be followed.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Mr. Suri, please declare. (*Interruptions*)

SHRI LALIT SURI: Sir, I do have an interest in tourism. But my question is very general. My question is on infrastructure.

SHRI NILOTPAL BASU: Sir, the point is not that. The Member has to declare his interest in that area. (*Interruptions*)

SHRI LALIT SURI: Sir, I will repeat what I have just said: I am an interested party in tourism and I do have interest in tourism.

Now, I am asking a very general question. I am not particular on hotels but I am putting a question on the infrastructure which is not related to hotels. I am only in hotels and not in infrastructure as yet. With the inflow of tourists, which is growing at 15 per cent a year and which might reach up to 25 per cent, how is the hon. Minister going to have a time-frame by which the infrastructure--mainly roads, highways and airports--are improved along with the inflow of tourists?

SHRIMATI RENUKA CHOWDHURY: Hon. Member, from your mouth to God's ears, may our tourism grow by such leaps and bounds, but, yes, you are absolutely right; we need to look at expanding our infrastructure. Today, I am fortunate that the Chairman of Standing Committee on Tourism in Parliament has taken a very viable view of what needs to be done. Also, we have approached the Planning Commission to earmark the funds. I have also appealed to the various State Governments that in their State Budgets, a tourism sub-Plan, where a minimum per cent should be allocated for the development of tourism and tourism infrastructure so as to enable accelerated development and growth of infrastructure across the country failing which, Sir, it is going to be dependent only on private-public partnerships, which most of them will be only in certain areas and we will not see a uniform growth.

So, I urge upon the hon. Members here to pressurise the State Governments to allocate funds to tourism as a sub-Plan under their State Budgets.

SHRI SANTOSH BAGRODIA: Sir, I too want to declare that I am a chairman of a hotel company.

श्री सभापति: आपने लेट किया है, आपने बहुत लेट किया है। ...(व्यवधान)... मैं आपको याद दिला रहा हूं कि मेरे पास क्वेश्चन्स बहुत ज्यादा हैं। इन क्वेश्चन्स को लूं तो पूरा एक घंटा लगेगा। मैं आपके पास यह लिस्ट भेज देता हूं। आप सबको अपने होटलों में बुलाओं और खाना खिलाओं। ...(व्यवधान)...

SHRI TARLOCHAN SINGH: Mr. Chairman, Sir, as per the figures given by the hon. Minister, I would like to know how many of them who are now coming to India are our own people, the people of Indian origin. What are their figures? Secondly, how many of them are on pilgrimage tour? What steps are being taken by the Ministry, especially for them, to open special counters at the airports and developing those pilgrimage centres where our Indian foreign tourists are coming?

SHRIMATI RENUKA CHOWDHURY: Sir, pilgrimage tourism remains a very large market as in tourism per se and most of it is not really regulated or moderated by the Governemnt of India as such. Several State Governments, which play host to pilgrimage tourists such as the State of Andhra Pradesh, etc., will be able to respond to the system much better. We do encourage any kind of public-private partnership to come into force to help to establish that. On the other hand, Sir, if you look at databases of how many NRIs come to India for pilgrimage tourism, we are only now structuring and setting about systems whereby we can identify what destinations the tourists choose. Sir, I can give him a detailed reply if he so wishes.

SHRI SHANTARAM LAXMAN NAIK: Sir, what perhaps Mr. Suri could not ask, I have the liberty to ask. Sir, Goa has been declared as the permanent venue for International Film Festival and for about 10 days this Festival goes on. Is the Tourism Ministry going to take any benefit from this Festival? I would also like to know whether any programme of tourism is going to be linked to the Festival during those days when it takes place in Goa.

SHRIMATI RENUKA CHOWDHURY: Sir, first of all the ambit of films fall under the I&B Ministry and we have very little to interact with that. We

would be happy to market India as a tourist destination whether it is for films or for trade or commerce, which we do. We have what is known as the MICE Destination marketing which we do quite comprehensively and then it is left for the initiative of various private players take up to market their product.

श्री सभापति: जो और लोग प्रश्न पूछना चाहते हैं, मैं उनकी लिस्ट भेज रहा हूं, आप इन सबको बुला कर देख लें। नेक्स्ट क्वैश्चन।

New Irrigation Projects

*382. SHRI T.S. BAJWA: Will the Minister of WATER RESOURCES be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government propose to start any new irrigation projects to provide irrigation facilities to farmers;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether Government have announced any package for the farmers of Jammu and Kashmir;

(d) if so, the details thereof; and

(e) by when this package is likely to be given?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF HEAVY INDUSTRIES AND PUBLIC ENTERPRISES AND MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF WATER RESOURCES (SHRI SONTOSH MOHAN DEV): (a) to (e) A Statement is laid on the Table of the House.

Statement

Irrigation being a State subject, schemes for water resources development for irrigation are conceived, planned and implemented by the State Governments. However, Government of India provides financial support under Accelerated Irrigation Benefit Programme (AIBP) to State Governments.

So far, 11 major/medium irrigation projects in Jammu and Kashmir have been cleared under the AIBP for creation of irrigation potential of 0.032 million hectare. A sum of Rs. 113.45 crore has been released to the Government of Jammu and Kashmir under AIBP.